

# RESTRICTION AND PREVENTION OF SCARLET FEVER

Sometimes called "Scarlatina," "Scarlet Rash," "Canker Rash,"  
or "Rash Fever."

DOCUMENT ISSUED BY THE MICHIGAN STATE BOARD OF HEALTH.

[72.]

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1. **Scarlet Fever** is believed to be one of the most contagious diseases. One attack usually prevents subsequent attacks. The greatest number of deaths from this disease are of children under ten years of age. Adult persons sometimes have the disease; and even though they have it in many instances in a milder form, yet they may communicate the disease in a fatal form to children. The isolation of those mildly sick with, and convalescent from, scarlet fever is important.

2. **Scarlet Fever** is believed to be caused by a special contagium or poison which may be conveyed, to persons previously unaffected, by personal contact, by infected clothing, rags, hair, or paper, or by any of the discharges from the body of a person affected with the disease.

3. **The discharges** from the throat, nose, and mouth are considered extremely dangerous, but those from the skin, eyes, ears, kidneys, and bowels, are also dangerous, and remain so for a considerable time.

4. **Communication.**—It is believed that the disease may be communicated by a person recovering therefrom so long as the usual subsequent scaling or peeling of the skin continues, which sometimes is not completed before the lapse of seventy or eighty days. The poison may also remain in clothing, etc., for a long time, possibly for years, especially if woolen and packed away in drawers or trunks.

5. **Filth, uncleanness, and imperfect ventilation** may increase the danger of spreading the disease.

6. **Period of Incubation.** *The interval of time which may elapse after exposure to the contagium of scarlet fever and during which a susceptible person so exposed may expect to be taken sick with the disease, varies from one to fourteen days.*

7. **Separation of the sick from the well.**—Whenever a child has sore throat and fever, and especially when this is accompanied by a rash on the body, the child should immediately be isolated as completely as possible from other members of the household, and from other persons, until a physician has seen it and determined whether it has scarlet fever. All persons known to be sick with this disease (even those but mildly sick) should be promptly and thoroughly isolated from the public.

That this is of more importance than in the case of small-pox is indicated by the fact of the much greater number of cases of sickness and of deaths from scarlet fever,—a disease for which no such preventive as vaccination is yet known.



8. **Persons who are attending upon children or other persons suffering from scarlet fever, and also the members of the patient's family, should not mingle with other people nor permit the entrance of children into their house.**

9. **Plain and distinct notices should be placed on the premises or house in which there is a person sick with scarlet fever, and no child that has not had the disease should be allowed to enter, or to associate with persons who do enter such house or room.**

10. **Children believed to be uninfected may be sent away from the house in which there is scarlet fever, to families in which there are no persons liable to the disease, or to previously disinfected convalescent wards in hospitals; but in either case they should be isolated from the public until the expiration of the period of incubation, counting from the time of their removal.**

11. **Householders and Physicians must immediately give notice of the first case and of every case of scarlet fever, to the health officer or to the board of health. This is required by sections 1734 and 1735, Compiled Laws of Michigan, 1871, as amended by Act No. 11, Laws of 1883, which with the new section (50) added in 1883, are as follows:—**

(1734.) SEC. 43. Whenever any **householder, hotel keeper, keeper of a boarding house, or tenant** shall know, or shall be informed by a physician, or shall have reason to believe, that any person in his family, hotel, boarding house, or premises is taken sick with small-pox, cholera, diphtheria, scarlet fever, or any other disease dangerous to the public health, he shall immediately give notice thereof to the health officer, the president or the clerk of the board of health of the township, city, or village in which he resides. Said notice shall state the name of the person sick, the name of the disease, the name of the householder, hotel keeper, keeper of boarding house, or tenant giving the notice, and shall, by street and number, or otherwise, sufficiently designate the house in which he resides or the room in which the sick person may be; and if he shall refuse or neglect immediately to give such notice he shall forfeit for each such offense a sum not exceeding one hundred dollars\*: *Provided*, That this penalty shall not be enforced if a physician in attendance has given to the health officer or other officer hereinbefore mentioned an immediate notice of said sick person, and true name of the disease, in accordance with the requirements of this section.

(1735.) SEC. 44. Whenever any **physician** shall know that any person whom he is called to visit, or who is brought to him for examination, is infected with small-pox, cholera, diphtheria, scarlet fever, or any other disease dangerous to the public health, he shall immediately give notice thereof to the health officer, the president, or the clerk of the board of health of the township, city, or village in which the sick person may be; and to the householder, hotel keeper, keeper of a boarding house, or tenant within whose house or rooms the sick person may be. The notice to the officer of the board of health shall state the name of the disease, the name, age, and sex of the person sick, also the name of the physician giving the notice; and shall, by street and number, or otherwise, sufficiently designate the house or room in which said sick person may be. And every physician and person acting as a physician, who shall refuse or neglect immediately to give such notice shall forfeit for each such offense a sum not less than fifty nor more than one hundred dollars\*: *Provided*, That this penalty shall not be enforced against a physician if another physician in attendance has given to the health officer, or other officer hereinbefore mentioned, an immediate notice of said sick person, and the true name of the disease, in accordance with the requirements of this section.

SEC. 50. For each complete notice in writing to an officer of the board of health, in full compliance with the preceding section, requiring from physicians or other persons notices of diseases dangerous to the public health, the physician who gave the notice shall be entitled, on duly certifying that each notice was correct, and when the bill has been duly audited by the board of health, to receive from the township, city, or village, in which the notice was given, the sum of ten cents.

\* **Supervisors** must prosecute for all such forfeitures; township officers must give notice to supervisor; prosecuting attorney to conduct suit if requested; see sections 6852, 6853, and 6855, Compiled Laws of Michigan, 1871. **Health officers of villages and cities** must notify prosecuting attorney of all violations of this section,—see Act No. 157, Laws of 1879; the **prosecuting attorney** must prosecute for all such forfeitures incurred within his county,—see section 6855, Compiled Laws of 1871.

12. Upon receipt of such notice, the local board of health has duties to perform in taking measures to restrict the spread of the disease, which it is a great violation of public trust for the board to neglect or postpone. The law is very plain as to the nature and the importance of these duties. Three sections of the law are as follows:

Notice of infected places. (1732.) SEC. 41. When the small-pox, or any other disease dangerous to the public health, is found to exist in any township, the board of health shall use all possible care to prevent the spreading of the infection, and to give public notice of infected places to travelers, by such means as in their judgment shall be most effectual for the common safety.

Board to make provision to prevent spread of disease. (1706.) SEC. 15. When any person coming from abroad or residing in any township within this State, shall be infected, or shall lately before have been infected, with the small-pox, or other sickness dangerous to the public health, the board of health of the township where such person may be shall make effectual provision in the manner in which they shall judge best for the safety of the inhabitants, by removing such sick or infected person to a separate house, if it can be done without danger to his health, and by providing nurses and other assistance and necessaries, which shall be at the charge of the person himself, his parents, or other person who may be liable for his support, if able; otherwise at the charge of the county to which he belongs.

At expense of person or county. 3 Mich. Rep. 475. Provision in case infected persons cannot be removed. (1707.) SEC. 16. If any such infected person cannot be removed without danger to his health, the board of health shall make provision for him as directed in the preceding section, in the house in which he may be, and in such case they may cause the persons in the neighborhood to be removed, and may take such other measures as they may deem necessary for the safety of the inhabitants.

13. Some of the duties of the local board of health, and of the health officer, relative to the restriction and prevention of diseases, are treated in Circular 64 from the State Board of Health, which was also printed on pages 67-78 of the Report of the Board for 1883. In order that no time may be lost, it is the duty of every board of health to make provision for prompt action by its health officer, authorizing and directing him to be prepared at all times, as executive officer of the board, to take certain action without waiting for a meeting of the board, whenever a case of scarlet fever, diphtheria, small-pox, or other disease dangerous to the public health occurs within its jurisdiction.\* Some of these duties of the health officer may be briefly suggested as follows: He should—

a. Verify the diagnoses of reported cases of scarlet fever and other diseases dangerous to the public health, that is, (if he has any reason to distrust the report) find out whether the person actually has the disease reported.

b. Secure isolation of those sick with or exposed to such a disease.

c. Give notice of infected places.

d. Regulate funerals of persons dead from scarlet fever, etc.

e. Disinfect rooms, clothing, and premises.

These duties are also required by Act No. 137, Laws of 1883.

14. The local board of health and the physician in charge of cases of this disease should co-operate for its restriction. The local board of health should especially guard against its spread by cases where no physician is employed.

15. The room into which one sick with this disease is placed should previously be cleared of all needless clothing, carpets, drapery, and other materials likely to harbor the poison of the disease, except such articles as are essential to the well-being of the patient. The sick room may have no carpet, or only pieces



which can afterwards be destroyed. Provision should be made for the introduction of a liberal supply of fresh air and the continual change of the air of the room without sensible currents or drafts.

16. **Handkerchiefs**, that need to be saved, should not be used by the patient; small pieces of rag should be substituted therefor, and after being once used should be immediately burned.

17. **Soiled clothing, towels, bed-linen, etc.**, on removal from the patient should at once, before removal from the room, be placed in a pail or a tub of boiling-hot zinc-solution, made in proportions as follows: water, one gallon; sulphate of zinc, four ounces; common salt, two ounces.

18. **The discharges** from the throat, nose, mouth, and from the kidneys and bowels of the patient should be received into vessels containing chlorinated lime (commonly called "chloride of lime") or sulphate of iron,\* or the zinc-solution mentioned in paragraph 17, and in cities where sewers are used thrown into the water-closet, elsewhere the same should be buried at once at least 100 feet distant from any well, and should not by any means be thrown into a running stream, nor into a cesspool or privy, except after having been thoroughly disinfected. Discharges from the bladder and bowels may be received on old cloths, which should immediately be burned—or disinfected and buried. All vessels should be kept scrupulously clean and disinfected. Discharges from the nose, ears, etc., may be received on soft rags or pieces of cloth, which should immediately be burned.

19. If the attending physician shall think best for the patient, an effort to prevent the spreading of the contagious particles thrown off from the skin may be made by anointing the body with oil, vaseline, etc., as the physician may direct.

20. **All cups, glasses, spoons, etc.**, used in the sick-room, should at once on removal from the room be washed in the zinc-solution mentioned in paragraph 17, and afterwards in hot water, before being used by any other person.

21. **Food and drink** that have been in the sick room, or otherwise infected with scarlet fever, should be destroyed or buried. It is best that it should not be put in the swill-barrel.

22. **Perfect cleanliness** of nurses and attendants should be enjoined and secured. As the hands of nurses of necessity become frequently contaminated by the poison of the disease, a good supply of towels and basins,—one containing a solution of chlorinated soda (Labaracque's solution), chlorinated lime, or the disinfecting zinc-solution, and another for plain soap and water,—should always be at hand and freely used.

23. **Persons recovering from scarlet fever** should be considered dangerous, and therefore should not attend school, church, or any public assembly, or use any public conveyance, so long as any scaling or peeling of the skin (see paragraph 4), soreness of the eyes or air-passages, or symptoms of dropsy remain. A person recovering from scarlet fever should not thus endanger the public health

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\*Carbolic acid in dilute form, as generally used, is not believed to be a disinfectant. Sulphate of iron (copperas) dissolved in water in the proportion of one and a half pounds of the sulphate to one gallon of water, is a good solution for chamber-vessels, water-closets, etc. When much is wanted it may be prepared by hanging a basket containing about sixty pounds of copperas in a barrel of water.



nor appear in public until after having taken four times, at intervals of two days, a thorough bath. The hair should be thoroughly washed. This cleansing, however, should be deferred until the physician in charge considers it prudent. After recovery from scarlet fever, no person should appear in public wearing the same clothing worn while sick with or recovering from this disease, except such clothing as has been thoroughly disinfected, and this without regard to the time which has elapsed since recovery. Nor should a person from premises in which there is or has been a case of scarlet fever attend any school, Sunday-school, church, or public assembly, or be permitted by the health authorities or by the school board to do so, until after disinfection of such premises and of the clothing worn by such person if it shall have been exposed to the contagion of the disease.

24. The body of a person who has died of scarlet fever should be wrapped in a cloth wet with a zinc solution of double the strength stated in paragraph 17, and with as little delay as possible be privately buried.

25. In order to prevent attendance at the funeral or visits to the house, newspaper notices of such deaths should state that the deceased person died of scarlet fever.

26. Burial of the dead from scarlet fever should be private, and the body should not be exposed to view.

#### DESTRUCTION OR DISPOSAL OF CLOTHING, BOOKS, FURS, ETC.

27. Clothing, carpets, curtains, furniture, and other substances that are to be destroyed should be dealt with in a way to avoid conveying the poison to any person in the process; they should not be simply thrown away, or into some stream or body of water; and if burned should be completely burned and not partly burned and partly warmed or dealt with in a way to spread the poison of the disease. The glowing furnace under a large engine-boiler, or a quick, strong fire in the open air, far from dwellings, is a good place for the burning.

28. All infected substances, which are not destroyed, should be either thoroughly boiled, subjected to a dry heat of 250° F. in a disinfecting oven, or be thoroughly exposed to fumes of burning sulphur, and afterwards exposed to open air currents for some days. Books and furs that have been used or handled by those convalescing from this disease are particularly liable to convey the poison to children who have never had the disease. Great care should be used to thoroughly disinfect any such articles that are not destroyed; and caution should be exercised before allowing children who have not had scarlet fever to handle any such articles that have been used by persons liable to communicate the disease.

#### DISINFECTION OF ROOMS, CLOTHING, ETC.

29. Aerial disinfection or fumigation can be completely and entirely effectual only in the absence of living persons, as heat or fumes strong enough for the purpose are destructive of human life. This need not deter from doing so much as is possible, without injury to sick persons, for the purification of the air of rooms occupied by them,—a liberal supply of pure air should be secured; but after the death or recovery from scarlet fever, the room in which there has been a case of this disease, the furniture, and other contents not to be destroyed, should be thoroughly exposed for several hours to fumigation by burning sulphur, and then, if possible, it should for several hours or days be exposed to currents of fresh air.



30. When a room and contents are to be disinfected, all articles therein should be spread out so as to expose the greatest amount of surface to the action of the disinfectant, and all openings to the room should be closed.

a. Because of the innumerable ways in which the contagion may be scattered about the house and premises where there has been for some little time a case of scarlet fever, the entire house and out-buildings, including cellar, garret, wood-shed, and privy, will usually need to be disinfected, and always should be aired by opening them to the air for several days as thoroughly as possible.

b. Rooms to be disinfected must be vacated. Heavy clothing, blankets, bedding, and other articles that cannot be treated with the zinc-solution, should be spread out so as to be thoroughly exposed during fumigation, which should take place in the room where the clothing, etc., has been used in connection with the patient. For a room about ten feet square, at least two pounds of sulphur should be used; for larger rooms, proportionately increased quantities, at the rate of two pounds for each 1,000 cubic feet of air-space.

c. Close all openings into the room as tight as possible, place the sulphur in an iron pot or pan supported upon bricks, set it on fire by hot coals or with the aid of a spoonful of alcohol lighted by a match, be careful not to breathe the fumes of the burning sulphur, and when certain the sulphur is burning well, leave the room, close the door, and allow the room to be closed for twenty-four hours.

d. Care should be taken to secure the complete burning of as much of the sulphur as is possible. For this purpose the iron pan or pot in which the sulphur is to be placed may previously be heated, and may be placed in the room over hot coals in a pan of ashes set up on bricks.

e. Privies, water-closets, cess-pools, gutters, drains, sewers, etc., should be frequently and liberally treated with copperas solution, made as described in the foot-note to paragraph 18.

f. *Body and bed clothing, etc.*—It is best to burn all articles of small value which have been in contact with persons sick with contagious or infectious diseases. Articles too valuable to be destroyed should be exposed in a disinfecting-oven for one hour to a dry heat of from 240° F. to 250° F., or be treated as follows: (See also paragraphs 27 and 28).

g. Cotton, linen, flannels, blankets, etc., should be treated with the boiling-hot zinc-solution, introducing them piece by piece, securing thorough wetting and boiling for at least half an hour. Heavy woolen clothing, silks, furs, stuffed bed-covers, beds, and other articles which cannot be treated with the zinc-solution, should be hung in the room during fumigation, pockets being turned inside out and the whole garment being thoroughly exposed. Afterward they should be hung in the open air, beaten and shaken. Carpets are best fumigated on the floor, but should afterward be removed to the open air and thoroughly beaten. Pillows, beds, stuffed mattresses, upholstered furniture, etc., after being disinfected on the outside, may be cut open and their contents again exposed to fumes of burning sulphur. In no case should the thorough disinfection of clothing, bedding, etc., be omitted. Infected clothing and bedding have been known to communicate scarlet fever months after their infection.

The foregoing methods of disinfection are applicable in other contagious diseases.

31. **Fresh air.**—Although not so active for the destruction of the contagium as is sulphurous acid gas, pure air, in liberal amount, is very useful for the dilution of the poison of the disease; it should be employed freely; but with this as with other procedures for the safety of the unaffected, great care should be taken not to increase the danger to those already sick, who are usually endangered by exposure to drafts of cold air, and this is especially true of persons convalescing from scarlet fever.

#### TEMPORARY SHELTER DURING DISINFECTION.

32. Disinfection of a room always necessitates vacating it, and sometimes makes it impossible to remain in adjoining rooms, therefore in some cases it seems essential to have hospital, tent, or other temporary shelter for the inmates of infected houses, where bathing, disinfection, and washing can be done while such houses are being disinfected and put in order. On this subject local boards of health should be consulted, and should be prepared to act.

#### HOW TO AVOID AND PREVENT SCARLET FEVER.

33. Avoid the special contagium of the disease. This is especially important to be observed by children and all whose throats are sore from any cause. Children under ten years of age are in much greater danger of death from scarlet fever than are adults; but adult persons often get and spread the disease, and sometimes die from it. Mild cases in adults may thus cause fatal cases among children. Because of these facts it is frequently dangerous for children to go where adult persons go with almost perfect safety to themselves.

34. Do not let a child go near a case of scarlet fever. Do not permit any person or animal to come or anything to be brought directly from a case of scarlet fever to a child. Unless your services are needed, keep away from the disease yourself. If you do visit a case, bathe yourself and change and disinfect your clothing before you go where there is a child.

35. It is probable that the contagium of scarlet fever may retain its virulence for some time, and be carried a long distance in various substances and articles in which it may have found lodgment. While it is not definitely proved that the germs of scarlet fever are propagated in any substance outside the living human or animal body, it is possible that they may be found to be thus propagated. Therefore, and because the breathing of air laden with emanations from decaying meat, or from sewers, cess-pools, sinks, and other receptacles of filth is believed to endanger health, great care should be taken to have the house, premises, and everything connected with dwellings kept clean and dry; to have sewer-connections well trapped, and house-drains constantly well ventilated; and to have all carriers of filth well disinfected. Do not permit a child to enter a privy or water-closet, or breathe the air from a privy, water-closet, cess-pool, or sewer into which non-disinfected discharges from persons sick with scarlet fever have entered, nor to drink water or milk which has been exposed to such air.

36. Do not permit a child to ride in a hack or other closed carriage in which has been a person sick with scarlet fever, except the carriage has since been thoroughly disinfected with fumes of burning sulphur, as specified in paragraphs 29 and 30.

37. All influences which cause sore throats probably tend to promote the taking and spreading of this disease. Among the conditions external to the



body liable to spread scarlet fever, perhaps the most common are: infected air, infected water, and *contact with infected substances or persons*. Because of this, and as a means of lessening the danger of contracting other diseases, the following precautions should always be taken, but more particularly during the prevalence of any such disease as scarlet fever.

38. Avoid exposure to wind and to breathing cold, dry air; also the use of strong vinegar or any other article of food which tends to make the throat raw or tender.

39. Do not wear or handle clothing worn by persons during their sickness or convalescence from scarlet fever.

40. Beware of any person who has a sore throat. Do not kiss such a person, nor take the breath of such a person. Do not drink from the same cup, nor use any article that has been used by a person sick with this disease.

41. Beware of crowded assemblies in unventilated rooms.

42. Do not drink water which has a bad taste or odor, or which comes from a source that renders it liable to be impure, especially if there is reason to believe it may contain something derived from a person sick with scarlet fever.

With the view of lessening the number of cases of and deaths from scarlet fever in Michigan, the foregoing is published by the STATE BOARD OF HEALTH for free distribution throughout the State, especially to officers and members of local boards of health. Physicians being to some extent the custodians and conservators of the public health, copies of this document are also sent to physicians in Michigan, in the hope that they will aid in diffusing among the people such knowledge of the nature of scarlet fever as will enable the people better to co-operate with them and with boards of health for the restriction of the disease and a decrease of sickness and deaths therefrom.

Any communication upon the subject may be addressed to: OFFICE OF STATE BOARD OF HEALTH, LANSING, MICHIGAN, from which, on application, any person may obtain a copy of this document, or of a similar document on the Restriction and Prevention of Diphtheria.

It cannot be expected that the distribution by the State Board will reach all of the one and a half million of people in Michigan, therefore the State Board of Health recommends that local boards of health procure and distribute copies of this document within their health districts, especially when scarlet fever is near. In order to facilitate such action, the State Board of Health has had the document stereotyped, and the plates placed in the hands of W. S. George & Co., Lansing, Michigan, who will supply local boards and others with any number of copies, on good book paper, in English, German, or Dutch, at rates as follows:

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In order that the document may do the greatest possible good, it is hoped that each one who receives it will not only make such use of it as will tend to disseminate most widely the suggestions and statements of fact contained therein, but will also *act for the restriction or prevention of this disease* in accordance with its suggestions, or by other effective measures.

**After reading this document with sufficient care to remember the principles involved please preserve it for future reference.**